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Fifteenth session

Summary record of the 237th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 31 March 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Cisternas Reyes

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35 (*continued*)

Initial report of Thailand (continued) (CRPD/C/THA/1; CRPD/C/THA/Q/1 and Add.1; HRI/CORE/THA/2012)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Thailand took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 11-20

2. **Mr. Charoen-Umnuaisuke** (Thailand) said that although the Subcommittee on the Elimination of Unfair Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities had received only 28 complaints, other channels were available to disabled persons to assert their rights. They could for example call a hotline, which had received approximately 3,000 calls in 2015, to seek help on issues relating to identity and disability cards, registration as persons with disabilities, disability allowances and other forms of financial support, domestic violence, etc. Problems could be settled through a reconciliation process or through the courts if necessary. Examples of precedent-setting court decisions had been provided to the Committee the previous day.

3. The Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act of 2007 would be amended to reflect the provisions of the Convention. With regard to disability identity cards, he said that the Government was aware of the problems faced by undocumented migrants with disabilities in accessing health care and was considering the issuance of another type of disability identity card to non-citizens that would allow them access to the benefits available to citizens, although coverage might be only partial in the early stages at least. Disabled persons living in remote areas had access to disability service centres run by organizations of persons with disabilities as well as the government Disability Services Centres. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Ministry of Public Health also ensured the provision of health care and information, including on their rights, to persons with disabilities and their families in rural areas, and offered additional support services, for example facilities for the repair of assistive devices and mobile health services.

4. Trafficking of children was punishable under the Criminal Code by up to 3 years' imprisonment and/or a fine of US$ 400. The Child Protection Act of 2003 prohibited parents or caregivers from abandoning children with disabilities. The Government provided support to parents of children with disabilities and worked to increase parental and community awareness of the needs of such children. Parental networks and associations, for example the Association of Parents for Thai Persons with Autism, offered a forum for the exchange of experiences, support and rehabilitation. In the current year the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security had allocated US$ 333,000 from the Fund for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities to support organizations of persons with disabilities and parent networks. There had been 271 cases of human trafficking in 2013, 236 of which had involved children; he had no information on whether any of those children had been children with disabilities.

5. The Criminal Code would be amended to reflect the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in particular with regard to the definition of child pornography and taking into account the role of new technologies, including the Internet. New police procedures would be developed to deal with new technologies and cooperation with other countries would be strengthened.

6. The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, in addition to its dispute resolution and follow-up and advocacy roles, could make recommendations to the Government for new legislation and programmes. It played an important role in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. In September 2015 it had undertaken consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders with a view to identifying challenges regarding the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act of 2007. It had recommended that the Government adopt measures to promote awareness of technologies to assist persons with disabilities in their daily life. As a result, the Ministry of Public Health currently offered accommodation and assistive technology support services, in cooperation with other departments, including the Social Security Office.

7. **Ms. Limmanee** (Thailand) said that the Fund for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities provided subsidies for disabled persons to hire assistants to help them live independently in their community. Lists of assistants and handbooks on personal assistance services were available. The Government was considering providing financial support to parents of disabled children, as recommended by the National Human Rights Commission; in the meantime they could request aid under the early childhood support and family and children in difficulty grants. The National Office for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities provided financial assistance for the independent living centres run by organizations of persons with disabilities. Those centres helped disabled persons integrate into their community; they offered peer counselling and general support, including for those requiring the services of an assistant, and facilitated the transition to independent living. The Office provided support to the Disability Services Centres for training, for example sign language and orientation and mobility training, and skills for coping with other disabilities. The Office likewise undertook awareness-raising activities to increase public acceptance of persons with disabilities. There were currently some 600 civil society volunteers assisting disabled persons and helping eliminate discrimination.

8. **Ms. Pitipanyakul** (Thailand) said that planning for disaster risk management took into account the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Groups of persons with disabilities were involved in planning for prevention and disaster response and the needs of particularly vulnerable groups, like persons with disabilities, the elderly and children had been prioritized for emergency support and health care. They would also have priority in case of evacuation. Guidelines on procedures for persons with disabilities and their families to follow in case of flooding were being prepared, as well as guidelines for the public on how to assist persons with disabilities in emergency situations.

9. **Ms. Siangyai** (Thailand) referring to access to justice, said that the Ministry of Justice had developed a new code on the accessibility of Ministry facilities. The Ministry had provided legal assistance in 431 cases, 239 of which had involved legal advice and 28 financial assistance for costs. Financial assistance had been provided to persons with disabilities on 163 occasions. Under the terms of the Justice Fund Act of 2015 financial assistance would be made widely available to the poor and vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. The Code of Criminal Procedure required that the needs of persons with disabilities be accommodated at all stages of legal proceedings, for example through the provision of sign language interpretation services. The same protections were available to children with disabilities in the juvenile and family courts.

10. Under Thai law legal capacity was determined on the basis of ability and not any specific physical or intellectual disability. Persons with disabilities were considered to have the same legal capacity as other citizens. In legal proceedings an individual could, however, be declared by a court to be legally incompetent on the ground of a mental or intellectual disability, but only following an assessment and recommendation by a team of psychiatric and medical specialists. In some cases a court could suspend a proceeding if an individual

was found to be legally incompetent, until such time as the individual's condition changed. In the case of an offender having a psychological or mental disability that would make it unsafe to release him into society, that individual could be committed to a hospital. Such an order was subject to judicial review and could be revoked at any time.

11. **Dr. Suvapan** (Thailand) said that, pursuant to the Mental Health Act of 2008 and the guidelines of the Medical Council of Thailand, a patient could only be sterilized if she gave her written consent after receiving an explanation of the procedure and its risks and consequences. In the case of a child, the parents could take a decision after being informed of the risks and consequences of the procedure as well as any alternatives.

12. She explained that in rural and low-income families children were often left alone while the parents were away working, leaving them at risk of sexual exploitation and unwanted pregnancies. That could lead the parents to opt for sterilization. A woman with a mental disorder could give her informed consent to undergo sterilization. Although in principle any sterilization must be approved by a team made up of a psychiatrist, a doctor, a nurse, a lawyer, a social worker and others, there were inconsistencies in the application of the law, especially in rural areas. More work should no doubt be done to raise awareness among doctors, parents and patients. One possible solution to the problem of sterilization in low-income families would be to increase awareness of the need to prevent sexual abuse and to provide financial assistance in the case of an unwanted pregnancy.

13. **Dr. Loharjun** (Thailand), referring to the issue of psychiatric admissions to hospitals, said that there was a need to ensure proper justification for such admissions; general practitioners must be better educated on mental health issues and more psychiatric nurses were needed. More must also be done to provide community-based care for the individuals concerned. Community psychiatric boards would be established throughout the country to take decisions on care for persons with psychosocial disabilities. A referral system for individuals with psychosocial disabilities was also being developed.

14. Rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities would be opened and more infrastructure would be made accessible. More educational opportunities, including vocational training, would be made available, with a view to increasing the social empowerment and security of persons with disabilities. A number of projects were under way to promote better health, prevention and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities. The Government's overall objective was to deinstitutionalize care and promote community-based living and social development by increasing the capacity of families and caregivers as well as the capacity of persons with disabilities to live in the community.

15. **Mr. Ratanasakorn** (Thailand) said that the corporal punishment of children was forbidden. Positive discipline was the preferred option. A teacher found to have used corporal punishment was subject to sanctions and/or criminal prosecution. Boarding schools for children with intellectual disabilities used a flexible approach: students could board or simply attend day classes. There were currently 20 such schools, an insufficient number given that 28.8 per cent of students had some form of intellectual disability. The curriculum was developed on the basis of consultation with parents, the community, local government and the private sector and highlighted practical skills. Programmes existed to facilitate students' transition from school to work. The fact that some 80 per cent of graduates found employment testified to the effectiveness of the preparation students received.

16. **Ms. Limmanee** (Thailand) said that women with disabilities were protected from domestic violence by a number of laws, including the Domestic Violence Victims Protection Act of 2007. Under the Act, offenders were liable to imprisonment and fines and could be ordered to pay compensation to their victims. The Government had set up a telephone hotline to enable persons with disabilities to file complaints of domestic violence

and access support. Ministry of Public Health volunteers carried out home visits to persons with disabilities, providing physical therapy and assistance and reporting any instances of domestic violence that came to light. Peer counselling and personal assistance training services were also available.

17. **Ms. Patarachoke** (Thailand) said that there were currently around 110,000 refugees from Myanmar living in nine camps along the Myanmar-Thailand border, some of whom had been living in Thailand for more than 30 years. A number of refugees from Myanmar had been resettled in third countries. There were currently no data available on the number of refugees with disabilities. Health-care services were provided for all inhabitants of the camps by the Government and organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières and CARE International. Severely ill refugees were referred to local public hospitals. Government bodies and civil society organizations had provided specific assistance to refugees with disabilities, including artificial limbs and training on the production of artificial limbs and other assistive devices. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior had facilitated visits to the camps by representatives of United Nations agencies and foreign diplomats. The national authorities had been working with civil society bodies to prepare refugees for repatriation by means of occupational training.

Articles 21-33

18. **Mr. Langvad** asked what measures had been taken or planned to ensure that persons with disabilities could buy private health insurance and that persons with disabilities who found employment did not consequently lose access to disability-related support services. Information on any plans to introduce sanctions for public bodies failing to recruit persons with disabilities and to ensure that such persons received appropriate occupational training would be welcome. He asked what steps had been taken to ensure that data were collected and systematically disaggregated, taking into account criteria such as violence, political participation, health, education, employment, refugee status, disability and indigenous affiliation. Was the State party taking into consideration the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the context of national statistics on persons with disabilities?

19. **Mr. Ruskus**, noting the large number of institutions for persons with disabilities operating in Thailand, asked what measures had been taken to support families of persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities living alone affected by poverty and neglect, how the State party intended to phase out institutions and promote independent living, support and community-based services and how the authorities planned to ensure that teachers and school administration staff were properly trained in inclusive education methods. Information on the percentage of the annual national budget allocated to efforts to make the general education system more accessible and inclusive compared to the percentage set aside for special education schools would be welcome.

20. **Ms. Degener** said that she had received a statement issued by a number of Thai organizations of persons with disabilities, expressing strong disapproval at the disrespectful manner in which the head of the Thai delegation had invited a delegation member, a person with disabilities, to take the floor at the previous meeting.

21. Supported by **Ms. Peláez Narváez**, **Ms. Quan-Chang**, **Mr. Lovászy** and **Mr. Basharu**, she expressed her own irritation at that incident.

22. She endorsed the remark made by Mr. Ruskus about the need to improve the provision of inclusive education. She asked what measures the Government intended to take to help schools adapt learning materials to the needs of students with disabilities and to act on the recommendations made by the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and

Protection of Human Rights relating to the need to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand in the light of its recent downgrading to B status.

23. **Mr. Tatić** said that the delegation should provide information on measures taken to ensure that election campaigns, televised political debates and public political meetings were accessible, including the provision of sign language interpretation, captioning and materials printed in Braille and easy-read formats, and on Thai cultural and tourist sites and related websites.

24. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** asked what the State party had done to protect children with disabilities from sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons, what the legal consequences of forced or court-ordered sterilization were, what effect that procedure had on the other rights of the victims of sterilization and how the State party ensured that persons with disabilities had access to services offering protection against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

25. **Ms. Quan-Chang** said that she was concerned at the situation of children with disabilities subjected to sterilization and other forms of abuse by their families. She asked what criteria were applied when appointing experts with disabilities to the National Committee on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, whether organizations of persons with disabilities were consulted in that regard, why proposed reforms designed to bring national legislation into line with the Convention put forward by those organizations had been rejected and to what extent their opinions were taken into account when preparing public disability policies and measures.

26. **Mr. Lovászy** asked how the Thai Telecommunication Relay Service was funded, what plans had been drawn up to make it more widely available, what legal safeguards and procedures were in place to allow persons to access the service on an equal basis and how appeals and complaints could be lodged against the service provider. He asked how the Government ensured that teachers were qualified in inclusive education methods and/or sign language and how many such teachers had been employed to date. He asked whether a road map existed with figures and milestones, particularly in terms of inclusive education.

27. **Mr. Basharu** said that he had not received an answer to his question on section 152 of the Constitution and the representation of persons with disabilities by disability experts. He asked what the State party had done to discourage educational establishments from blocking the admission of students with disabilities and what sanctions had been put in place in that regard. Further information on assistance at voting stations for persons with disabilities, in particular blind persons and amputees, would be welcome.

28. **Ms. Kingston** said that she had not received a complete answer to her question on article 11 of the Convention. She asked how the national authorities ensured respect for privacy in psychiatric institutions. In relation to article 31, information on any measures taken to collect and disseminate data would be welcome. She asked whether such data were accessible for persons with disabilities and whether they participated fully in the process of data collection and research.

29. Referring to article 32, she asked what guarantees were in place to ensure that international cooperation was inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities, what programmes and projects had been launched that specifically targeted persons with disabilities, what percentage of the total international cooperation budget had been allocated to such programmes and projects, what action had been taken to facilitate and support capacity-building and to what extent the State party was committed to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

30. **Mr. You** Liang asked whether the national authorities collected data through surveys or face-to-face meetings with persons with disabilities and whether the State party actively participated in the ongoing efforts of the Asia-Pacific countries to ensure the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities.

31. **Mr. Kim** Hyung Shik (Country Rapporteur) asked whether the national disability allowance was universal and whether it was sufficient to cover living costs. He asked how many persons were entitled to that allowance and whether any studies on poverty among persons with disabilities had been carried out in the State party.

32. **The Chair** asked what percentage of persons with disabilities had access to comprehensive rehabilitation. Repeating an earlier question, she also asked through what channels recommendations issued by the Office of the National Human Rights Commission were conveyed to the Government for implementation. She pointed out that the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had also made recommendations regarding the provision of free and inclusive education to all children in Thailand, including children with disabilities.

33. She wished to lay stress on a point that had been made many times before, namely that primary prevention of disability did not fall within the scope of the Convention.

34. **Mr. Inthusut** (Thailand) said that he wished to apologize for any misunderstanding that might have arisen from the manner in which he had introduced one of the delegation members at the previous meeting. He had not intended to disrespect her but, rather, to give her encouragement before she took the floor.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

35. **Mr. Muntarbhorn** (Thailand), replying to questions on the National Human Rights Commission, said that the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights had downgraded the Commission from A to B status because of concerns about interference in the commissioner selection process and the lack of involvement by civil society in that process. Although the Commission had originally been set up correctly, the rules governing it had since been amended, resulting in a smaller and less diverse selection committee. However, the draft twentieth Constitution contained provisions expressly requiring the involvement of civil society organizations in the selection process. There were plans to make the Commission more accessible to those living in rural and remote areas by establishing regional branches.

36. **Ms. Siangyai** (Thailand) said that the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission were transmitted to the highest authorities, including the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the constitutional drafting committee. The issue of the access of voters with disabilities had already been considered by the Election Commission, which had also voiced concerns about confidentiality. Nevertheless, the national legislature was discussing voting procedures, including the introduction of various accommodations for voters with disabilities, prior to the referendum to be held in August. Political debates and campaigns that were broadcast on State television benefited from sign language interpretation; however, it was the responsibility of the political parties to provide that service at political rallies.

37. **Ms. Limmanee** (Thailand) said that a number of laws dealt with the exploitation of children, including children with disabilities, and that the definition of exploitation under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act covered sexual exploitation, forced labour and slavery. In April 2015, the Prime Minister had placed the prevention of trafficking and the punishment of traffickers on the national agenda. In December of that year, the Criminal Code had been amended to criminalize child pornography, including the dissemination of child pornography via the Internet.

38. **Ms. Thongtip** (Thailand) said that persons with disabilities had the same labour rights as other workers. Quotas for persons with disabilities had been introduced in the public sector at a later stage than in the private sector, and there were no plans to impose on government agencies measures of the kind that applied to private companies, especially with regard to sanctions for non-compliance. However, a resolution adopted in October 2015 stipulated that government agencies would have to meet their quotas by 2018. Efforts to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in both sectors continued to be hindered by an insufficient number of candidates owing in part to their inadequate level of education and health conditions and the lack of access to public transportation. In response, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education were providing more job training and encouraging enrolment in vocational schools, including in rural and remote areas, in order to equip persons with disabilities with marketable skills. In addition, the National Committee on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities had adopted the Manpower Plan 2017-2020 which provided for the placement of workers with disabilities in all of the National Committee's 77 provincial offices.

39. In an effort to showcase the potential of persons with disabilities and ensure they had an income and were included in society, the Ministry of Labour had declared 2016 as the year of the employment of persons with disabilities.

40. **Mr. Ratanasakorn** (Thailand) said that over the past decade the Government had made great strides in overcoming cultural and systemic barriers in order to give children with disabilities access to mainstream education. In 2015, students with disabilities had been enrolled in all levels of education. Problems remained, however, in particular with regard to the insufficient number of appropriately trained teachers. The Ministry of Education had established a standing commission on the promotion of education for persons with disabilities, of which the vice-chair was a representative of an organization of persons with disabilities. The Ministry had also launched a strategic education plan, resulting in a greater number of students with disabilities pursuing higher education. It had trained more than 28,000 teachers in the early identification of disabilities and was working with universities on the development of a compulsory course on inclusive education for teachers in training.

41. More than US$ 1 million had been allocated to special needs education in 2015, and the Ministry had approved several million US dollars in spending on educational support, accessible teaching tools and other aids in 2016. Currently, annual spending per student was higher for students with disabilities enrolled in special schools than for those in mainstream establishments, thereby hindering the expansion of inclusive education. Nevertheless, school administrators needed to be more creative when opening their establishments to students with disabilities rather than relying solely on the budgetary support of the Bureau of Special Education. Thailand would welcome any suggestions on how to overcome other structural barriers to the full implementation of inclusive education.

42. **Dr. Suvapan** (Thailand) said that, according to the National Health Security Office, 99 per cent of persons with disabilities were covered under one of the three State schemes; however, they were also free to take out additional private insurance.

43. **Dr. Loharjun** (Thailand) said that there had been no cases of court-ordered forced sterilization. With the input of other government agencies and civil society, the Ministry of Public Health ran various campaigns on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV which also targetcd persons with disabilities. Regarding privacy in psychiatric hospitals, she said that patients who posed a risk to themselves or others could be placed in less crowded wards. Community-based rehabilitation services brought together various stakeholders, were centred on the promotion of independent living and were being expanded to the entire country and to other spheres, such as education, employment and participation in society.

Between 2012 and 2014, more than 3,000 persons with psychosocial disabilities had joined a community-based rehabilitation programme.

44. **Ms. Boonsombat** (Thailand) said that a pilot project had been carried out to promote accessibility to cultural sites of interest to tourists. The project in question related to the tourism sector and aimed to improve accessibility within communities. The project was organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and the Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with other government ministries and local authorities. The Ministry of Culture also promoted access to information for persons with disabilities through the provision of sign language interpreters for television programmes.

45. **Ms. Rachatanantikul** (Thailand) said that the disability allowance of US$ 27 per day was intended to be an additional source of income for persons with disabilities, not a replacement for the minimum wage. It was planned to carry out a national disability survey in 2017 in collaboration with civil society, to include interviews with persons with disabilities. The questions asked would reflect the recommendations of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. The data resulting from the survey would be disaggregated and accessible to persons with disabilities. The appointment of disability experts to the National Committee on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities was at the discretion of the agency concerned.

46. **Ms. Pitipanyakul** (Thailand) said that the Government supported the involvement of persons with disabilities in a wide range of national, regional and international meetings. In 2016, 12 per cent of the total budget of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, amounting to US$ 700,000, was allocated to international cooperation efforts.

47. **Mr. Charoen-Umnuaisuke** (Thailand) said that it was planned to upgrade the Subcommittee on the Elimination of Unfair Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities to committee status. Section 15 (3) of the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act would also be deleted, while section 37 would be amended. The National Committee on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities wished Thailand to become a party to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled and the relevant national legislation was in the process of being amended to prepare for accession to the Treaty.

48. All persons with disabilities who were not in employment had access to universal health coverage. Once they began to work they were required to make payments towards their health care. That situation was currently under review by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities with the aim of ensuring that no rights or benefits would be lost by a person who entered the labour market, so as to encourage persons with disabilities to seek work where possible.

49. **Ms. Benjasil** (Thailand) said that development cooperation was one of the key areas of the Government's foreign policy. Thailand had provided technical assistance to and shared best practices with neighbouring countries on numerous occasions, and had also provided training in fields such as health care to medical professionals in the region. A memorandum of understanding had been signed with several neighbouring countries, including Cambodia and Viet Nam, on cooperation on disability-related issues. Thailand's development cooperation efforts aimed to support the public health system in neighbouring countries in general as well as to improve the care offered to landmine victims in those countries.

50. **Ms. Neelapaijit** (National Human Rights Commission of Thailand) said that the dialogue with the Committee had provided many lessons on how to put into practice the rights enshrined in the Convention, which would help the National Human Rights Commission to better monitor the way the Convention was implemented. The Commission

considered that the key challenges for the future were: the amendment of the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act; setting and subsequently monitoring a specific time frame for the promotion and protection of intersectional rights; the harmonization of legislation to ensure that it complied with the Convention; the increased participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes within the National Committee on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities; and the elimination of stigmatization and discrimination against persons with disabilities, especially among the authorities responsible for mainstreaming social inclusiveness.

51. The National Human Rights Commission was prepared to work with the Government to implement the Committee's recommendations and to act to foster cooperation between the Government and persons with disabilities in Thailand.

52. **Mr. Inthusut** (Thailand) said that he appreciated the dialogue with the Committee and acknowledged that there were still challenges to overcome. The Government would focus on six issues in particular in the future, namely awareness building, enhancing all aspects of accessibility, integrating the work of all government agencies, addressing discrimination, working to achieve development goals and reforming laws and regulations to ensure that they complied with the spirit of the Convention.

53. **Mr. Kim** Hyung Shik (Country Rapporteur) said that the delegation was to be commended for having endeavoured to answer the questions posed by the Committee and for the undertakings it had given with regard to the implementation of the Convention. Nonetheless, a number of concerns remained about certain issues, namely the need for a greater number of persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making, the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, the reform of the disability identification card system, and the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. It was also commendable that the State party had shown a willingness to revise legislation in certain areas, such as section 15 (3) of the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act. The State party should provide the Committee with any supplementary information in writing, if deemed necessary.

54. The head of delegation had offered a welcome apology regarding what must have been a misunderstanding at the previous meeting. It was important to understand the sensitivities of persons with disabilities and to promote the mutual understanding of differences, especially in the context of fostering the working relationship between the Government of Thailand and the Committee in the future.

55. **The Chairperson** thanked the delegation and the Committee members for the constructive dialogue.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.